DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 415 145 SO 027 873

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TITLE The Measurement of Nonviolence.
PUB DATE 1996-07-00
NOTE 17p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Society of Political Psychology (Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, July 3, 1996).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Aggression; Altruism; Antisocial Behavior; *Attitude Measures; *Conflict Resolution; Cooperation; Higher Education; Interpersonal Communication; *Peace; Problem Solving; *Prosocial Behavior; Social Control
IDENTIFIERS *Nonviolence

ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the assessment measures developed to recognize nonviolent dispositions. Based on computer searches of the Psychological Abstracts (PsychLit) database, the document identifies the best measures for assessing nonviolence such as: (1) The Nonviolence Test developed by Kool and Sen (1984); (2) the Gandhian Personality Scale developed by Hasan and Khan (1983); and (3) the pacifism scales developed by Elliott (1980). Each assessment measure possesses certain limitations and/or is only appropriate for adults. The review concludes with recommendations for the development of new instruments for use with children and adolescents which incorporate the philosophy of Gandhi and current theory of aggressive behavior. (Contains 17 references.) (Author/EH)

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The Measurement of Nonviolence

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Paper presented at the annual meetings of the International Society of Political Psychology, Vancouver, B. C., Canada, July 3, 1996. Requests for reprints can be made to the second author at the Department of Psychology, Lewis-Clark State College, Lewiston, Idaho, 83501, U.S.A. or at dmayton@lcsc.edu.

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Abstract

Nonviolence provides a means for conflict resolution without the negative effects of violence or aggression. Given the potential benefits of its application, several instruments have been developed to measure nonviolent dispositions. This paper reviews the measures which were identified via computer searches of the Psychological Abstracts database (PsychLit). The Nonviolence Test developed by Kool and Sen (1984), the Gandhian Personality Scale developed by Hasan and Khan (1983), and the pacifism scales developed by Elliott (1980) were the best measures found to assess nonviolence, however, they possessed certain limitations and/or were only appropriate for adults. The review is concluded with recommendations for the development of new instruments for use with children and adolescents which incorporate the philosophy of Gandhi and current theory of aggressive behavior.

The Measurement of Nonviolence

Nonviolence involves more than just a means for conflict resolution, it encompasses a way of life in which individuals confront problems and find peaceful resolutions. Yet, the concept of nonviolence has not received the same amount of attention that violence and aggression have (Mayton, Diessner, & Granby, in press). A search of PsychLit between 1990 and 1996 provides only 65 nonredundant references to the terms nonviolence, pacifism, and nonaggression while over 8500 nonredundant references are available for the terms aggression and violence.

This is an unfortunate state of affairs given that nonviolent means of conflict resolution are far less costly than are those involving violence or aggression. Furthermore, Boulding (1977) suggested that less than ten percent of human activity consists of conflict processes, but they are nonetheless overemphasized because of their visible nature. The relevance of nonviolence is therefore more prevalent and beneficial. Given the potential for the psychology of nonviolence to reduce numerous societal problems including abuse within the family, violent crimes, and global and regional conflict, further study is merited.

The Power of Violence

Boulding explains that violence arises "mainly out of dialectical processes, that is, processes which involve fighting, struggle, and the conflict of one organized system against another" (p. 23). There are three

types of violence that Boulding identifies. The first is the cult, where violence is done simply for the pleasure of its inflicters who possess no desire for changes in behavior. The second type of violence is extermination, where violence is undertaken in order to eliminate an opposing party. The breakdown of threat systems is the last type of violence recognized by Boulding, which he considers to be the most prevalent.

The threat of violence can occur on both a small scale and a large scale according to Boulding. For instance, a threat exists when a parent tells a child "come here or else you will get a spanking." If the child submits to the parent, then the violence will dissipate. But should the child be defiant, then the violence is likely to take place. On an international scale, the threat of violence plays a significant role in relations between countries. In fact, war can be identified as instances where failures occur in the threat system. And it is virtually impossible to argue that wars have not brought changes. Unfortunately, with war also comes a high cost in terms of destruction and loss of lives.

The topic of violence is closely related to the topic of nonviolence, the difference being the way in which conflicts are resolved. Obviously, the study of nonviolence has a much more positive focus, and the application of nonviolent behavior to regional and global peace issues is much more relevant.

Nonviolence

What is nonviolence? Henry David Thoreau, Leo Tolstoy, and Martin Luther King Jr. have spoken and written extensively on the nature and implications of nonviolence as a political strategy. While many individuals have offered various ideas to explain the meaning of nonviolence, Gandhi's philosophy is probably the most recognized.

Gandhi's Philosophy of Nonviolence

Gandhi employed three different principles to achieve political goals during his lifetime. These principles are called *satyagraha, ahimsa,* and *tapasya* (e.g. Bose, 1987; Nakhre, 1982). Together, the techniques provide a means of nonviolent action in situations of conflict. They have been widely used, such as in the burning of registration cards, sit-down strikes, and in the protests of regulations on free speech (Allen, 1987).

The word *satyagraha* is translated by Nakhre (1982) to literally mean the "holding on to the truth." This particular word was chosen by Gandhi to avoid any notions that a *satyagraha* engages in passive resistance. Gandhi said that "truth [*Satya*] implies Love, and Firmness [*Agraha*] engenders and therefore serves as a synonym for force..." (Buck, 1984, p. 135). *Satyagraha* therefore involves action, but one must discover the truth before he or she can grasp it. Furthermore, only God knows the absolute truth, rendering man's search as one for relative truth. According to Nakhre, "These truths are based upon our beliefs in the nature

of human needs and the form of the social system that would best satisfy it (p. 14)." Because the truth is based upon the subjective perceptions of individuals, a person needs to be willing to change his or her conception of truth if opposing values seem more convincing.

The goal of a *satyagraha* is to discover the truth through the establishment of values within the settings of conflict situations. *Ahimsa*, Gandhi's second principle, provides the means to achieve this discovery. This word literally means noninjury, and is usually translated as 'nonviolence' (e.g. Buck, 1984; Nakhre, 1982). One aspect of nonviolence is the refusal to inflict harm or injury on others. There is also a more positive aspect of *ahimsa*. Nakhre explains this aspect as not simply harmlessness but also the approach to truth through showing love, even towards those who relish in evil doings.

By following the principles of *satyagraha* and *ahimsa*, an individual undertakes a journey of finding the truth through nonviolence and love. The last key principle of Gandhi's philosophy is '*tapasya*,' which Nakhre identifies as self-suffering. *Tapasya* actually becomes the essential expression of nonviolence and truth. It follows the concept that the truth of a nonviolent activist may be further from the real or absolute truth than that of his opponent. Nonviolent activists are subsequently more likely to endure hardship or suffering themselves rather than to inflict harm on others whose truth might actually be closer to reality. Pelton

(1974) adds that because violence begets violence, a nonviolent activist's willingness to endure suffering can result in the least amount of conflict.

One final Gandhian concept that is often overlooked is *swaraj*. This concept is like the others in that it is derived from Hindu spirituality. It's meaning is self-control. Teixeira (1987) explains that *swaraj* in Gandhian philosophy refers to both personal self-control and the social goal of Indians to become independent and free from British colonialism.

Measurement of Nonviolence

Despite the fact that numerous goals have been achieved by nonviolent activists like Gandhi and Martin Luther King, there remains a significant need for research on nonviolence. One reason why empirical data on nonviolence is uncommon is the small number of measures which have been developed to measure nonviolent behavior and tendencies. This is rather troublesome, especially considering the knowledge yet to be gained from research on the differences between individuals predisposed to nonviolence and those predisposed to violence.

A computer search of the PsychLit database between January 1974 and June 1996 was conducted to identify references to nonviolence, pacifism, and nonaggression. A total of 131 journal articles, books, and chapters in psychological books were identified. From this group of articles only three specific measures of nonviolence were identified. These were the scales developed by Kool and Sen (1984), Elliott (1980),

and the one developed by Hasan and Khan (1983).

The Nonviolence Test

Kool and Sen (1984) developed a psychometric test, commonly referred to as Nonviolence Test (NVT) in India to assess nonviolent predispositions. The NVT is based on the general principles of nonviolence discussed by Gandhi and others. The purpose of the test is to show that violent individuals lack self-control while nonviolent individuals possess self-control. Thus, persons who lack self-control are more likely to engage in violent activities such as physically injuring others and making retaliations through revenge.

The NVT is a 65 item scale in English which is deemed by its developers to be appropriate for individuals older than 17 years. Among the items are 36 items that are scored and the remainder are simply fillers. Each forced choice item describes a situation and the respondent is instructed to indicate which one of two possibilities is the closest to their own reaction. Support for one of the contrasting statements indicates a nonviolent orientation while support for the other, a violent orientation. For instance, respondents are forced to determine if "a country is supporting terrorist acts" either the country should be "attacked by military action until these acts end" [violent alternative] or "persuaded through negotiations to withdraw their support of terrorism" [violent alternative].

A single global nonviolent score is obtained from the NVT. The single raw score can range from 0 to 36 and is obtained by summing the number of nonviolent responses to the 36 active items and omitting the 29 filler items. Higher scores indicate stronger tendencies to use nonviolent strategies to solve conflict situations. Low scores indicate a tendency to use violent or aggressive responses.

The NVT has a test-retest reliability of .81 (Kool & Sen, 1984). The internal consistency of the NVT was reasonable with an alpha reliability of .82 and a split half reliability of .78 (Kool & Sen, 1984).

The validity of the NVT has been demonstrated using concurrent validity methods (Kool & Keyes, 1990; Kool & Sen, 1984). Correlations between the NVT and the Buss-Durke Aggression Inventory have been computed to be -.44 and -.51 in two different samples. Further research was done by Kool and Keyes (1990) examined the NVT scores of groups known to be either violent or nonviolent in their behavior and identified patterns which provided additional support for this scale's validity.

Pacifism Scales

The second instrument is the pacifism scales developed by Elliott (1980). Elliott's definition of pacifism draws on the philosophy of Gandhi and involves four components - physical nonviolence, psychological nonviolence, active value orientation, and internal locus of control. Elliott designed scales to measure each of these four components.

The pacifism scales consisted of Likert and forced choice items. Following item analysis a total of 30 items measured physical nonviolence, another 30 measured psychological violence, 10 measured active value orientation, and 20 measured locus of control. Pacifist responses for both types of items were assigned the higher values in the scoring process. Scores can range from 4 to 1 on the Likert items with 4 being the most pacifistic response. On the forced choice items a score of two is assigned to the pacifist alternative and a one is assigned to the other alternative. Composite scores were obtained by summing the items within each component.

Using factor analytic techniques, Elliott provided evidence to confirm the four components of pacifism within a correlated model. The internal consistency of the four components using Cronbach's alpha found the subscales to have coefficients ranging from .62 to .84. Validity data for Elliott's scale was not available.

Heaven, Rejab, and Bester (1984) applied Elliott's scales to groups of Afrikaners and Indians in South Africa and found them to be unreliable in these nonWestern samples. The researchers cautioned that in future applications of Elliot's scales, users should be aware of cultural differences.

Gandhian Personality Scale

Based on an analysis of Gandhi's life and teaching, Hasan and Khan

(1983) identified *ahimsa*, openness to experience, self-disclosure, self control and self-suffering, and intraception and transcendence of logical thinking as important components of a Gandhian personality. Hasan and Khan (1983) developed the Gandhian Personality Scale (GPS) to assess these components of a Gandhian or nonviolent personality.

The Gandhian Personality Scale (GPS) is a 29 item instrument which requires respondents to indicate their level of agreement on a seven-point Likert scale. The GPS was developed from a pool of 123 statements which were direct quotes or paraphrases of Gandhi's statements. The final 29 items were selected using a factor analysis which identified a total of six factors. These factors were labeled (1) Machiavellianism-antimachiavellianism, (2) authenticity, (3) cynicism-anticynicism, (4) openness to experience/tolerance, (5) tenderness and generosity, and (6) trust in human nature.

While some internal consistency information is inherent in the application of factor analysis, no additional reliability or validity data is provided for the GPS. In fact, Hasan and Khan (1983) are troubled by the lack of correspondence between the Gandhian principles and the clusters yielded by the factor analysis. The GPS needs additional research to determine its psychometric acceptability.

Recommendations for Nonviolence Scale Development

Of the three measures of nonviolence reviewed here the NVT (Kool

and Sen, 1984) has the best documented validity and has a record of effective usage cross-culturally. While the NVT is based on Gandhian principles, its single composite score does not reflect the multiple facets of Gandhi's views of nonviolence in a systematic way. Despite this, the NVT appears to be a reasonable choice to use with adult samples where a single global score is sufficient.

The pacifism scales developed by Elliott (1980) have the strongest theoretical rationale of the three measures reviewed. *Satyagraha* , *ahimsa*, *tapasya*, and *swaraj* are all represented within the internal structure of the pacifism scales. Thus these scales reflect the multidimensional nature of the philosophy of nonviolence taught by Gandhi very accurately. The lack of validity data and the documented problems of cross-cultural appropriateness are real concerns. However, future research with these pacifism scales seems clearly warranted. Validity studies and further cross-cultural usage would be especially critical.

After reviewing existing measures of nonviolence, it is striking that no scale was identified which was designed for children and young adolescents. Some of the items on the NVT and the Pacifism scales do not present situations and choices relevant to children and adolescents today. This is one clear area of need for future nonviolent scale development.

Given the high rates of adolescent homicides in the inner cities of United States combined with alarming levels of family violence and abuse,

a theoretically strong, multidimensional nonviolent scale could be useful for violence prevention research. A new scale with realistic items for the 1990s would be especially useful if it combined the theoretical base proposed by Elliott (1980) with our current understanding of the psychological literature on aggression and violence (e.g. Berkowitz, 1993). Betancourt and Blair (1992) have outlined and tested a cognitive-emotion model of violence in conflict situations. Their model includes not only the attribution processes of controllability and intentionality but interpersonal emotions which mediate the violent behaviors and thus contribute to nonviolent behavior choices. Anger along with the empathic emotions of pity and sympathy were found to be related in a positive or negative way to aggressive and nonaggressive behavior (e.g. Betancourt and Blair, 1992; Staub, 1992). The inclusion of items measuring these emotions into a nonviolent scale seem apropos. Finally, the development of a new nonviolent scale which utilized a model drawing from the nonviolence and violence theories would serve as a link between the violence/nonviolence literature which seems to be desirable at this time.

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